

# MEETING SUMMARY | Dinkey Collaborative Full Group

July 18, 2013

## Dinkey Landscape Restoration Project, Sierra National Forest

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*This meeting summary paraphrases individual comments and suggestions from Dinkey Collaborative members. Statements do not indicate consensus of the group unless they are preceded by the words, "AGREEMENT:".*

*All materials are available to members on DataBasin.org, and general information is available on the Dinkey Collaborative website, [www.fs.usda.gov/goto/sierra/dinkeycollaborative](http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/sierra/dinkeycollaborative) For questions please contact the facilitator, Mr. Dorian Fougères, at [dfougeres@ccp.csus.edu](mailto:dfougeres@ccp.csus.edu) or (916) 531-3835.*

### Action Items

1. **Dorian** – distribute Stephanie Barnes’ PowerPoint presentation on Yosemite toad and Yellow-legged frog, and Landscape Planning Work Group’s final PowerPoint
2. **Dorian** – distribute Pam Flick’s links to the toad and frog listing information in the Federal Register
3. **Dorian** – distribute the July 19 field visit workbook
4. **Dorian** – distribute example representation letter for public outreach materials
5. **Dorian** – distribute copy of member biographies
6. **Mosé** – ensure Jason Banaszac and Craig Thompson complete identification of fisher rest and den sites in South of Shaver
7. **All members** – submit revised biographies to Pam Flick by COB Friday, August 30
8. **All members** – submit comments on the revised Fisher Marking Guidelines by COB Friday, August 2

9. **All members** – submit comments on draft Fisher Photographic Field Guide by COB Friday, August 2
10. **All members** – submit representation letters for public outreach materials by September 19
11. **Mandy** to update members about SCALE at the August full Collaborative meeting.

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Mosé Jones-Yellin, Deputy District Ranger, High Sierra Ranger District (HSRD), Sierra National Forest (SNF), was absent, so Mr. Ray Porter, District Ranger, was there to represent the Forest. Dorian Fougères, Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP) Facilitator, reviewed the agenda items and meeting ground rules. In addition, Mr. Fougères asked members to fill out the trust meter handout and turn it in by the end of the day.

## 2. Landscape Planning Progress

- Mr. Mark Smith gave a presentation to the group regarding the landscape analysis and initial thoughts on selecting a “general project area.” He had maps for members showing the new unit of analysis used for the planning process, called a Management Unit Group (MUG), which was approximately 5,000 acres.
  - When possible MUGs were based on existing area boundaries for the Dinkey Landscape. (Ex: Soaproot, Eastfork).
- The presentation reviewed indicators the work group had either revised or developed since the last meeting, and additional ecological restoration opportunities (Owl Habitat, Mixed Severity Fire, Blacked Backed Woodpecker, Snag Density, and Percentage of Oak).
- A table of the indicators and opportunities was reviewed with the group, and the following were comments made by members:
  - The purpose of the planning process is to establish an area in need of ecological restoration treatment on the Dinkey Landscape.
  - Fire return interval was severely departed everywhere on the landscape, so the opportunity to apply prescribed fire was created as a way to differentiate the landscape with regard to fire.
  - Additional indicators were selected based on the last full collaborative meeting, and cultural issues were explored by indicators (especially percentage of oak).
    - In regards to watershed resilience, a question was posed about which indicator best treated watershed resilience. Note that percentage of oak aids watershed resilience.
  - Note that the indicator regarding the owl was specific to the Spotted Owl.
  - A member asked if socioeconomic and economic issues were considered when establishing indicators because the Wildlife Urban Interface (WUI) would have influence on establishing a boundary.
    - Socioeconomic efforts were regarded as an opportunity throughout the landscape, and at minimum would be addressed during project planning.

- Resource management constraints and people's use of the landscape will also influence how a project addresses socioeconomics. If there were significant opportunities in a general area, it could influence the project boundary. Consider economics, such as revenue streams, to be analyzed when picking project boundaries.
- Note that Fresno County economics are tied to recreation throughout the National Forests. Fresno County should focus on watershed restoration, and the downstream users getting sufficient water supplies.
- The Sierra Institute is conducting the Dinkey socioeconomic assessment, which could be integrated into configuring a possible project boundary. Although it remains unclear exactly when this will be complete, it should inform project planning.
- The work group had not developed a socioeconomic indicator, but agreed the topic was important and that they would have further discussion to develop this part of the landscape planning process.
- Note the foundation of the planning process was a series of ecological indicators.
  - Identifying a general area of interest, preliminary gathering of information from the field, and eventual identification of a new project boundary would then follow.
  - The map that focused on areas with limitations (the PACs, Fisher sites, and the WUI) would also help inform selection.
- Identify challenging planning issues upfront to allow for well-informed decisions about where the group does on the landscape.
- In response to a question, Mr. Smith explained that prioritizing efforts was a difficult procedure (no one indicator is clearly more important than the other), and no weights were put on any indicators.
- The tribal community places high priority on restoring the black oaks and thus factors such as habitat, cultural, and watershed issues. For example, relationships between predators and prey.
- A suggestion was made to use fuel loads as an indicator, but fuel loads are considered when determining fire intensity.
  - It was suggested to show the portions of the WUI already planned for treatment, areas that had had multiple entries, and areas where NEPA is already in progress, because the large majority of the landscape was already or was soon to be treated.
  - It was noted that assessment of flammability is a hazard analysis, while assessment of ignitions (through lightning, among other things) is a risk analysis. It was reiterated that the work group had modeled flammability, but almost all of the landscape was high hazard, so this did not help identify where to go next.

### 3. Seeing the Landscape

Ms. Sue Britting presented the current indicator list, which would continue to evolve. The indicators are to be completed by August. She reviewed each indicator for the members, and the following were comments made by the group:

- Consider focusing on fuel density in areas, and assign a risk factor.
  - Flame lengths are part of fireline intensity, which is an existing indicator that captures this concern. Questions on how to provide proper treatments based on proximity to fisher, owl, or the WUI would change methods of thinning (ex: mechanical thinning).
  - Fireline intensity relates to wildfire, and applying mixed intensity is considered “applied fire”. Fuel loading is a major component in fireline intensity.
- Note that fire is very important on the Dinkey Landscape. It would be beneficial to identify MUGs with WUIs, and consider their natural conditions.
- Percentage of oak refers to anywhere on the landscape where oak is present, which is relevant in the lower elevation project areas. It was noted as an opportunity because oaks are not present on the highest elevations of the Dinkey Landscape.
- In regards to the watershed, the intent of the project would determine what was appropriate. For example, if the focus is to do an ecosystem restoration project, the area most disturbed would be an ideal project boundary. However for any other project, the watershed might be too sensitive for other treatment disturbances.
  - In regards to watershed scale, it is challenging to identify an appropriate scale of analysis because in some areas small improvements could have large effects.
- The metric used for watershed disturbances included the effects of any soil disturbance projects, typically but not only associated with mechanical vegetation thinning.
  - In regards to seral stage, it was asked how to deal with the either lack of or too much shrub cover. The work group noted that they were still working on the seral stage indicator, which would cover this.
- Note that for the MUGs that scored highly, the opportunities would be looked at carefully.
- Consider timescale when identifying project areas, especially longer term effects.
- Feasibility needs to be considered during the site selection process, such as economic and ecological. Feasibility might be a finer scale indicator, and though important, not best approached on the landscape scale.
  - Feasibility could be referenced if a MUG has recreation areas.
- More than one recommended MUG would be presented for the full collaborative meeting in August.

### 4. General Updates

- **Project Updates**
  - Members had received a handout reviewing the current projects. They had the following comments:

- In regards to the letter of non-support for the Bald Mountain project, it was asked if there were any alternative treatments suggested. Mr. Porter stated that Mr. Mosé Jones-Yellin planned to meet with any member who had signed the letter of non-support and update them on the project's progress and each adjustment. If Mr. Jones-Yellin did not have time to set up a meeting, than Mr. Ramiro Rojas, Ms. Sorini-Wilson, and Mr. Porter would set up a meeting to review Bald Mountain with those who submitted letters.
  - In regards to the tree sizes being removed in Soaproot, it was noted that these were generally less than 12" diameter trees, with some 12" to 16" trees, with occasional hazard trees up to 30" diameter trees.
- **Revised Draft Fisher Marking Guidelines**
  - Revised guidelines were circulated during the June Field trip. Mr. Jones-Yellin edited these for improved accessibility and distributed a new version to members. Members could add comments, and there would be a webinar to resolve any comments on the guidelines if needed.
  - Mr. Thomas stated that under page 6, the guidelines had an unresolved question about basal area to capture moderate quality sites. Mr. Rojas explained that he was unaware of Mr. Sorini-Wilson having added the comment because she was concerned that these areas were not being adequately detected.
  - **ACTION ITEM: Mosé** – ensure Jason Banaszac and Craig Thompson complete identification of fisher rest and den sites in South of Shaver.
  - **ACTION ITEM: All members** – submit comments on the revised Fisher Marking Guidelines by COB Friday, August 2.
- **Affiliation Confirmation for Public Outreach Materials.**
  - It was asked that any members who wanted to add their organization as an affiliation to the Dinkey Collaborative public outreach materials were to submit a letter on their represented organization's letterhead.
  - **ACTION ITEM: Dorian** – distribute representation letter for public outreach materials
  - **ACTION ITEM: All members** – submit representation letters for public outreach materials by September 19
- **Biography Submissions**
  - Ms. Flick informed members that she would be editing the biography document, so if any members were interested in adding or editing their biography and photo to have the document sent to her by August 30.
  - **ACTION ITEM: Dorian** – distribute copy of member biographies.
  - **ACTION ITEM: All members** – submit revised biographies to Pam Flick by COB Friday, August 30
- **National Forest Plan Revision Meetings**
  - Mr. Dirk Charley announced to members the public meetings scheduled for August 16 and 17.
  - He handed out a letter regarding the meetings, and encouraged members to attend.

- For current updates and information, visit the Forest Service website because information would be made available as soon as possible.

## 5. Monitoring Updates

- Mr. Van Velsor had handouts for members to refer to as he presented the monitoring updates.
  - Note a final draft of the Monitoring plan would probably be discussed at the full meeting on August 15, 2013.
  - Ms. Roberts had completed reviewing current monitoring activities, to fill the data gaps with the Monitoring Work Group.
  - The national indicators document is still being developed and will be sent to Congress in summer of 2014.
  - Sierra Institute had completed two rounds of socioeconomic assessment interviews, and will provide the results to the Collaborative in August or September
  - Regarding SCALE, Sierra Cascades All Lands Enhancement Program, Ms. Mandy Vance stated that as part of her work with the Sustainable Forest Communities Collaborative she would be working with the other groups, and attending the meeting in Chester on July 23.
    - Mr. Van Velsor stated that the agenda is available to any interested member.
    - Mr. Van Velsor reviewed the members that previously volunteered to work with SCALE, and stated that the other meetings would be in a more central location.
    - The Dinkey Collaborative had shared a draft monitoring plan with the other collaborative groups.
    - SCALE might be able to help secure additional funding.
- ACTION ITEM:** Mandy to update members about SCALE at the August full Collaborative meeting.

## 6. Information on Sierra Nevada yellow-legged Frog and Yosemite toad Proposed Critical Habitats on the Dinkey Landscape

Ms. Stephanie Barnes had a presentation about the proposed critical habitat for Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog and the Yosemite toad within the Dinkey Landscape. She noted that the US Fish and Wildlife Service was responsible for the listing, and the Forest Service would comply with the necessary documentation and work. Comments followed her presentation:

- Critical habitat is needed species recovery.
- Note no effect on private lands.
- Any projects located within the critical habitat boundaries would require more awareness for the species habitat during planning stages. The group has opportunities to provide beneficial treatments for the frog and toad.

- No critical habitat areas within the Dinkey Landscape were proposed for the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog (though the frog is found by Shaver Lake, those areas were not proposed as critical habitat), but approximately 44,000 acres were shown as critical habitat for the Yosemite toad overlapped previous Collaborative projects (Eastfork, Bald Mountain). Displayed in the map during the presentation.
- Note the changes would require documentation of effects to critical habitat (which is new) and conferencing (leading to consultation if the species are listed). It is anticipated that project designs and criteria should be similar to what is currently being done.
- As per Ray Porter: Significant constraints are not anticipated. However, there could be conflict between grazing and the Yosemite toad.
- Consider keeping in mind the species when planning treatments in proposed critical habitat. It might require different strategies to accomplish the goals. Most of the proposed critical habitat for the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog is at higher elevations in the wilderness (although grazing does occur at higher elevations).
- Note the toad's terrestrial habitat is harder to identify because of the range of area they may occupy outside of meadow habitats. Females were found up to 1250 meters outside of meadow. The majority of the dispersal occurs within 60 days of completion of breeding (early spring). In critically dry years dispersal can be completed by mid July. In extremely wet years at higher elevations, dispersal may not be completed until early September.
- A member discussed Snow Corral Meadow as being an area with both the frog and toad. They discussed the awareness of both the short and long-term effects of the projects while planning treatments (i.e. decommissioning the crossing at the meadow where frogs have been observed).
- Many factors affect the frog and toad. All of the impacts were noted, including chytrid fungus (Bd). Smaller populations of Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog were found to have some tolerance to the fungus.
- Any project within proposed critical habitat that would have an effect on the habitat would need to have conferencing, and there would be a Forest Service individual working with the Fish and Wildlife Service to maximize the efficiency of the process.
- It was asked if there were any mitigation strategies being done. The fungus cannot be removed, but the California Department of Fish and Game (now called California Department of Fish and Wildlife) are removing non-native trout from some lakes to allow Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog to re-establish populations. Note not all proposed critical habitat areas have fish, so removal of non-native trout is not applicable everywhere.
- It was stated that Ms. Susan Roberts, Monitoring Coordinator, could aid in filling data gaps for frog and toad in areas within the Dinkey Landscape.
- **ACTION ITEM: Dorian** – distribute Stephanie Barnes' PowerPoint presentation on Yosemite toad and Yellow-legged frog, and Landscape Planning Work Group's final PowerPoint
- **ACTION ITEM: Dorian** – distribute Pam Flick's links to the toad and frog listing information in the Federal Register

## 7. Preparation for July 19 Public Field Visit

Ms. Flick, Ms. Reynolds, and Ms. Vance presented information and materials to the group regarding the public field visit scheduled for July 19, 2013. Comments were as follows:

- Approximately 8 members planned to attend the field visit.
- A press release was issued in the Fresno Bee, and they noted 18 RSVPs.
- They planned a different approach to educating the public, through exploratory journals, and minimizing lectures to the public. They stated that the goal was to engage and educate the public with different methods.
  - They noted the Whiskey Ridge events, which Ms. Vance been involved, and how effective and positive the outreach had been with the public.
- The journal intended for the public (provided by the Collaborative) included an executive summary, contacts, maps, spaces for notes, review of GTR220, timber marking guidelines, and a public survey.
- It was stated that members should promote the Collaborative's projects and events whenever possible for maximum engagement.
- They hoped that this public field visit would lead to more involvement and interest in greater participation for future public events.
- Mr. Bagley stated that the So. Cal. Edison prescribed burn field visit (with approx. 18 attendees) had received positive feedback, and Mr. John Mount, Central Sierra Historical Society, stated that he has written a book on the area's treatment.
- A member suggested having a sign-in list for interested individuals who want to be added to the Dinkey mailing list to receive updates.
- They added a special consideration for the Sustainable Forests and Communities Collaborative's (SFCC) help and involvement with the public field visit, and appreciated their active partnership.
  - **ACTION ITEM: Dorian** – distribute the July 19 field visit workbook.

## 8. Draft Fisher Rest and Den Site Photographic Identification Guide

- A presentation was given by Ms. Rebecca Green about the fisher den site photographic identification guide created for field crews. Members gave Ms. Green comments about the guide:
  - Add height of structure, height of animal location in structure if possible, height of site, slope (when info analyzed).
  - Add index of terms, including explanation of numbering of fishers.
  - Add info re: area around base of tree (shrub, little trees, dense clumps, cooler areas, dogwood, near stream).
  - Add descriptive text in general to each page.
  - Add description of how cavities are created so people can also consider this when in the field.



- Integrate with Fisher Marking Guidelines, just like GTR 237 had illustrative examples.
- Add a summary table at the end including percent in type of tree species and structure (conifer, hole in tree, large limb), and size of tree range.
- Add pictures of surrounding areas.
- Consider use in the field when laying out, (one image per page plus annotations).
- Post to website as public education tool.
- Add more examples of sites that are hard to identify visually with the surrounding context (for example trees that are 22" or greater DBH).
- Consider video component, for use as supplemental tool in the classroom, perhaps recorded webinar, with field visit follow-up, and also "train the trainers" session.
- Should have a quiz at the end of the guide and ask, "is this picture fishery or not?" and also a quiz in the field.

**ACTION ITEM:** All members – submit comments on draft Fisher Photographic Field Guide by COB Friday, August 2

## 9. Next Steps during August 15 Meeting: Landscape Planning MUG Prioritization Process

- The work group stated that they would look at each MUG and add up the indicators that where out of the preferred range to identify areas in most need of treatment (as referenced in the indicator table).
  - The group would consider whether to develop a weighting scheme.
- Data is to be gathered during the rest of the field season after the general area has been identified.
- Note that suggestions from the group (economic feasibility, socioeconomics, and the WUI) could influence the project boundary.
- Consider the areas within MUGs available for mixed intensity fires, which would be away from WUIs.
- Experimental areas were not taken into account when creating the planning process for identifying a boundary, but would be beneficial to identify (e.g., black-backed Woodpecker).
- The larger the percentage in a column, the more "out of whack" the indicator is within a MUG. N/A means it is not applicable or is unknown, which does not influence the MUGs total score.
- The opportunities section in the table does not affect the total score or percentage for the indicators based on reference conditions, but is considered as a second source of information after the indicators' scores had been tallied.
- For watershed disturbances, if the indicator was given a 0, then a treatment could not take place in that area without a major disturbance.
  - The watershed indicator could create obstacles, but would be taken into account when a final decision of a general project area is made.

- Mr. Fougères reviewed the day's action items. Mr. Porter thanked members for attending and closed the meeting.

## 10. Attendees

- |                      |                         |                      |
|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Chip Ashley       | 12. Dorian Fougères,    | 22. Greg Schroer, FS |
| 2. Justine Augustine | CCP                     | 23. Mark Smith       |
| 3. Rich Bagley       | 13. Gabriela Golik, CCP | 24. Frank Stambach   |
| 4. Carolyn Ballard   | 14. Ron Goode           | 25. Gerri Stambach   |
| 5. Sue Britting      | 15. Rebecca Green       | 26. John Stewart     |
| 6. Dirk Charley      | 16. Stan Harger         | 27. Craig Thomas     |
| 7. Narvell Conner    | 17. Andy Hosford        | 28. Craig Thompson   |
| 8. Kent Duysen       | 18. John Mount          | 29. Mandy Vance      |
| 9. Larry Duysen      | 19. Ray Porter, FS      | 30. Stan Van Velsor  |
| 10. Kay Errotabere   | 20. Justine Reynolds    |                      |
| 11. Pamela Flick     | 21. Ramiro Rojas, FS    |                      |